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ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of this study was to identify strengths and weaknesses of the present 4-H camp and conference programs. A total of 273 4-H members who attended the 1973 Tennessee State 4-H Congress and a total of 160 4-H agents responded to a mail questionnaire designed to probe members and agent preferences and expectations regarding camps and conferences. The specific objectives of the study with the major related findings were discussed in detail. (BP)

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A Research Summary of a Graduate Study

SOME OPINIONS OF SELECTED SENIOR 4-H MEMBERS AND EXTENSION AGENTS REGARDING TENNESSEE CAMPS AND CONFERENCES

Stephen H. Lester, Cecil E. Carter, Jr., Ben T. Powell
and Robert S. Dotson

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION EDUCATION
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SOME OPINIONS OF SELECTED SENIOR 4-H MEMBERS
AND EXTENSION AGENTS REGARDING TENNESSEE CAMPS AND CONFERENCES

by

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December 1973*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this survey-type study was to evaluate the present 4-H camp and conference programs in Tennessee. A total of 273 4-H members who attended the 1973 Tennessee State 4-H Congress and a total of 160 4-H agents responded to a mail questionnaire designed to probe member and agent preferences and expectations regarding camps and conferences.

Characteristically, members:

1. Had been in 4-H club work for an average of about seven years.
2. Had attended demonstration day about three times.
3. Had attended week-long 4-H camp about three times.
4. Had attended, on the average, less than one (0.5) senior leadership conference of less than a week, and the same number of week-long senior leadership conferences.
5. Had attended less than one (0.3) all star conference.
6. Had attended less than one day camp (0.2).
7. Had attended less than one (0.5) other 4-H camps and conferences.
8. Had attended a grand total of about three camps and conferences of all kinds.

Other major camp and conference findings included the following:

1. Members and agents both picked, "To have fun," as the number one reason (from among eight identified) why members attend camp; though members alone ranked the reason second to "To make new friends."

*Date of completion of an M.S. degree thesis by Stephen H. Lester on which this summary is based.

2. They chose "Summer employment" and "Friends did not attend" as the more important of seven reasons why 4-H'ers do not attend camp.
3. 4-H members and agents agreed that the most important opportunity provided by present camps and conferences was to develop leadership ability. Social, physical and mental development opportunities also were mentioned.
4. They felt that a first major purpose of such activities was to help them learn to get along with others. "To develop leadership" ranked as second most important major purpose.
5. Four "Value of camp" principles, eight "Program and method" principles, five "Staffing and planning" principles, and eight "Vocational and miscellaneous" principles of successful camp and conference organization and conduct were identified and tested.

In terms of specific evaluation, it was found that:

1. 4-H members felt present efforts at camp publicity and promotion were inadequate, while agents disagreed very significantly.
2. 4-H members and agents tended to agree in a positive evaluation of the present camp and conference programs.

Some significant differences were noted when 4-H members and agents were compared by sex and district.

Implications for application of findings and recommendations for further study were listed.

SOME OPINIONS OF SELECTED SENIOR 4-H MEMBERS AND EXTENSION AGENTS REGARDING TENNESSEE CAMPS AND CONFERENCES

RESEARCH SUMMARY*

I. PURPOSES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Purpose

The overall purpose of this study was to identify strengths and weaknesses of the present camp and conference programs as seen by selected 4-H members and agents. It was purposed that thought should be given to applying study findings to the planning of future camp and conference programs. Attention was given to some of the main factors which might influence the awareness of these needs. Principal comparisons made were between: (1) 4-H members and agents; (2) males and females; and (3) five Extension supervisory districts.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To determine and compare the previous 4-H experiences of member respondents in terms of numbers of years in 4-H and district events attended.
2. To determine why 4-H members attend or do not attend 4-H camps and/or conferences, as seen by all 4-H members and agents, male and female, by districts.
3. To determine what kinds of opportunities are presently provided for youth through 4-H camps and/or conferences, as seen by all 4-H members and agents, male and female, by districts.

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4. To determine the major purposes for having 4-H camps and/or conferences, as seen by all 4-H respondents and agents, male and female, by districts.
5. To propose and test some principles of successful camp and/or conference organization and operation, regarding values of camp, program content and method, staffing and planning, publicity and promotion, and vocational and other miscellaneous principles, as seen by all 4-H members and agents, male and female, by districts.
6. To evaluate the present camps and/or conferences, as seen by all 4-H members and agents, male and female, by districts.
7. To determine what season is preferred for Senior 4-H conferences, as seen by all 4-H respondents and agents, male and female, by districts.

II. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population in this study consisted of 288 4-H members who attended the 1973 Tennessee State 4-H Congress in Nashville, Tennessee, and 202 4-H Extension Agents.

The data collection instrument was developed by the author in cooperation with the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Education Department and in collaboration with the State 4-H Department. The mail questionnaire was sent to all 288 4-H members and the 202 4-H Extension agents. Plans were made to send out two follow-up letters to members and agents in hopes of receiving at least a 70 percent response from each group. The first questionnaires were mailed in May 1973, and plans for the follow-up letters were to

send them at 10-day intervals until adequate responses were obtained. Clearance to send out the letters was obtained from State and District Administration. Ninety-five percent of the 4-H members immediately returned their completed questionnaires, while 79 percent of the 4-H Extension agents returned theirs. This response from the first letters sent out was so productive that follow-up letters were unnecessary. Therefore, a total of 273 member and 160 agent surveys were available for the summary. The questionnaire was designed to find out what those attending State 4-H Congress liked or disliked about 4-H camps and conferences, and how they evaluated the present program, together with what their ideas were in regard to the development of future programs. Four-H Extension agents were questioned about the strengths and weaknesses in the present 4-H camp and conference programs, and about their ideas regarding how future camp and conference programs could be improved.

III. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The information obtained from the completed questionnaires was tabulated using actual answers, ranks and assigned weighted values. These values were used in calculating average scores for each of four sets of principles regarding effective conference and camp organization and operation. They were also used to help analyze data from two sets of criteria developed to evaluate the present program. Scores were then tabled in rank order. The average ratings for each of the principles and criteria were then calculated. In ranking the different variables, those with the lowest rank number and having the highest percent of mentions were ranked number one in importance. Percentages were based on the total number responding to each principle or criterion and were rounded to the nearest whole number. Chi square and t-test values were computed as appropriate. The 5 percent level of probability was selected.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

Major findings will be presented below under group headings related to the objectives of the study.

Comparison of Numbers of Years 4-H Member Respondents Were in 4-H and District Events Attended

1. All members had been in 4-H club work for an average of 6.7 years.
   a. Boys and girls averaged about the same.
   b. Members in District II averaged the highest number of years in 4-H (7.0) and those in District I averaged the lowest (5.9 years). Districts varied very significantly (.01).
2. All members had attended demonstration day an average of about three times.
   a. Boys and girls were about the same.
   b. Members in District IV averaged the highest number attended (3.6) and those in District I the lowest (1.8 times).
3. All members had attended week-long 4-H camp an average of about three times.
   a. Girls (2.7) averaged attending slightly more than boys (2.3).
   b. Members from Districts II, III and IV, had attended the largest number of 4-H camps (2.7) and those in District V, the smallest (2.1).
4. All members on the average had attended less than one (0.5) senior-leadership conference of less than a week.

a. No difference was noted between boys and girls.

b. Members in District II on the average had attended the largest number (0.7), and those in District V the fewest (0.3). Districts varied significantly (0.5).

5. All members on the average had attended less than one (0.5) week-long senior leadership conference.

a. Boys and girls did not differ.

b. Members in Districts varied very significantly, those in District II averaging the largest number (0.8), and those in District I, the smallest (0.1).

6. All members had attended all star conference less than one time (0.3).

a. A significantly larger number of boys than girls had attended more times (0.5 level).

b. Members in the five supervisory districts did not differ significantly, although those in District II averaged attending more conferences (0.5), than those in District IV (0.1).

7. All members had attended day camp an average of less than one time (0.2).

a. A higher percent of boys on the average attended more day camps than girls.

b. Members in the five districts did not differ significantly, though percents attending day camps ranged from 4 percent in District II, to 15 percent in District III.

8. All members responding indicated that on the average they had attended less than one (0.5) other camp and/or conference.

a. Boys and girls did not differ significantly.

b. Members in the five supervisory districts did not differ significantly though percents attending varied from 18 percent in District II to 39 percent in District IV.

9. All members on the average had attended a total of about three of the camps and/or conferences reported above (see items 1-8).
   a. Boys and girls did not differ.
   b. Members in Districts varied though not significantly. Members in District II reported having attended the highest average number of camps and conferences (3.3), while those in Districts I and V reported the least (2.6).

Reasons for Members Attending Camp

1. Four-H members and agents ranked the top four reasons why members attended camp as follows:
   a. Reason 1 - To have fun.
   b. Reason 2 - To make new friends.
   c. Reason 3 - Friends were attending.
   d. Reason 4 - To learn more about agriculture or home economics.
2. Four-H members and agents differed very significantly on rankings on eight of nine reasons given. Besides the four reasons given in number one above, other reasons of significant difference included:
   a. Reason 5 - To get away from home for a week's vacation
   b. Reason 7 - Parents wanted them to attend.
   c. Reason 8 - To learn to swim.
3. Four-H members and agents did not differ significantly on the sixth ranked reason, namely, "Agent wanted them to attend," though the former ranked it fifth and the latter eighth.
4. Male and female 4-H members did not differ significantly on any reasons given.

5. Male and female 4-H agents differed significantly on Reason 4, "To learn more about agriculture or home economics," and very significantly on Reason 2, "To make new friends," and Reason 8, "To learn to swim." Females ranked reasons higher in all these cases.
6. Members in the five supervisory districts did not differ on all reasons for 4-H'ers attending camp, although significance was approached on Reason 3, "Friends were attending."

Reasons for 4-H'ers Not Attending 4-H Camp

1. Four-H members and agents generally agreed in their ranking of the first four reasons why 4-H'ers did not attend camp, namely:
   a. Reason 1 - Summer employment.
   b. Reason 2 - Friends did not attend.
   c. Reason 3 - Parents.
   d. Reason 4 - Camp programs did not appeal.
2. Members and agents differed significantly in their placing of Reason 4, above, very significantly in their rankings of Reasons 2 and 3 above (agents ranking items higher) and very significantly on Reason 5, "Did not know about camp," members ranking it higher.
3. When rankings of reasons given by boy and girl 4-H'ers were considered, it was found that they differed very significantly on only one reason, namely Reason 1, above, though both sexes ranked it first.
4. When male and female 4-H agents were compared, it was noted that they differed very significantly on Reason 2, above, the latter ranking it higher, and on Reason 7, because of the "Extension agent," females again ranking it higher.

Significance was approached but not achieved on Reason 6, "Cost was too high," females ranking it higher.

5. When members were compared by districts, it was found that they did not differ significantly on any reasons.

Opportunities Provided by 4-H Camp

1. All 4-H members and agents agreed in their placings of six opportunities provided campers, namely:
   a. Opportunity 1 - Leadership.
   b. Opportunity 2 - Social development.
   c. Opportunity 3 - Physical development.
   d. Opportunity 4 - Mental development.
   e. Opportunity 5 - Spiritual development.
   f. Opportunity 6 - Outdoor living experiences.
2. Four-H members and agents differed significantly on Opportunity 1, above, and very significantly on Opportunities 2,3,4 and 5 above. Agents tended to rank the first five higher.
3. Boys and girls did not differ significantly regarding their ranking of any opportunity offered.
4. Male and female 4-H agents did not differ significantly on any of the opportunities.
5. Members did not differ significantly from one district to another concerning opportunities provided by camp.

Major Purpose for Having 4-H Camps and Conferences

1. All 4-H members and agents generally agreed in their ranking of the first five purposes for having 4-H camp, namely:
   a. Purpose 1 - To provide campers the opportunity to learn to get along with others.
   b. Purpose 2 - To develop leadership.

c. Purpose 3 - To develop individual personality and character.

d. Purpose 4 - To provide campers with the opportunity to assume responsibility.

e. Purpose 5 - To provide campers with the opportunity to make new friends.

2. Four-H members and agents differed significantly on only two major purposes for 4-H camp, Purpose 8, "To provide opportunity for worthy use of leisure time...," agents ranked it higher, and Purpose 9, "To provide the camper with opportunities for developing an understanding ... for nature," members ranking it higher.

3. Boy and girl members did not differ significantly on rankings of any major purpose.

4. Male and female 4-H agents did not differ significantly in rankings of any purposes, though significance was approached on Purpose 7, "To provide opportunities for learning specific agriculture and home economics subject matter," and on Purpose 9, above, males rating both higher.

5. Members differed very significantly according to districts regarding major Purpose 2, above, the highest percentage reporting this purpose being 42 percent in District II and the lowest being 29 percent in District IV.

Principles of Successful Camps and/or Conferences

1. All 4-H members and 4-H agents generally agreed with the four principles in the Values of Camp set, though they very significantly disagreed in the degree of concurrence mainly on Principle 4, "Camps should provide opportunities for pioneer camping." Members tended

to agree and agents to disagree with this as a principle. Principle 1, dealt with physical exercise, Principle 2, with giving campers responsibility and Principle 3 with letting members choose their educational activities.

a. No significant differences were noted between male and female 4-H members and agents.

b. Respondents differed very significantly according to districts on Principle 4, above.

2. All 4-H members and agents agreed regarding eight principles related to program content and method. The 4-H members and agents differed significantly on only one, Principle 6, "There should be a program on drug abuse." Members felt that there should be such a program. Other principles dealt with exercise, learning by doing, offering unusual and adventuresome activities, the nature of camp topics and ecology.

a. Boys and girls differed significantly on Principle 4, "Good career-vocation employability experiences should be offered for older youth." Girls agreed more fully with the principle than did the boys.

b. Male and female 4-H agents did not differ significantly on any of the principles, though males felt there should be a program on drug abuse, while females disagreed.

c. Respondents differed significantly according to districts regarding Principle 6, above.

d. Members and agents opposed sex education for camp.

3. All 4-H members and agents agreed generally with four of the five principles of staffing and planning. Members and agents differed

significantly on Principle 5, "Camp classes should be taught by college students," both rejecting it, and very significantly on Principle 1, "Teen leaders make the best camp leaders for juniors," both accepting the principle, Principle 3, "There is a need for a wildlife specialist . . . ," members rejecting and agents accepting, and Principle 4, "Younger adults make the best camp leaders for seniors," members accepting and agents rejecting it. Members ranked Principles 1, 4 and 5 higher, while agents ranked Principle 3 higher. Principle 2 dealt with involving campers in planning.

a. Males and females did not differ significantly in agreement regarding any of the principles.

b. Respondents differed significantly by districts on Principle 5, above, and very significantly on Principle 1, 3 and 4, above.

4. All 4-H members and agents tended to agree with the first five of the eight principles related to vocational and miscellaneous aspects of camp and to disagree with the last three. Members were in significantly greater agreement than agents with Principle 4, "Boys and girls should attend 4-H camp at the same time." Members also were in significantly greater disagreement with Principle 6, "Senior members should have to meet certain requirements before attending senior conference," and in very significantly greater disagreement with proposed Principle 7, "Weekend conferences would promote more involvement than week-long conferences for senior members." In turn, agents were in significantly greater disagreement with Principle 8, "The 4-H record book should be used as a requirement for 4-H members to attend camp," than members.

a. Girls tended to be in significantly greater agreement than boys on Principle 2, "Good career-vocation employability experiences should be offered for older youth." On Principle 5, "Off-season camps in which specialized programs such as project personal growth, and careers are discussed should be offered," the significant difference was found to indicate that boys tended to disagree with the principle, while girls accepted it. Very significantly more boys than girls approved Principle 4, "Boys and girls should attend 4-H camps at the same time." Both boys and girls disagreed with Principle 8, "The 4-H Record Book should be used as a requirement for 4-H members to attend camp," more of the latter disagreeing.

b. Male and female 4-H agents did not differ significantly. Members by districts differed significantly on Principles 4, 6 and 8 above. They differed very significantly on Principle 7 above. Other principles dealt with "surprise" activities and the subject matter topics available at camp.

c. No significant differences were noted by districts.

Evaluation of Present Camp Program

1. Six items under Publicity and Promotion were included as evaluation criteria for use in studying the present camp and conference situation in Tennessee. All 4-H members tended to feel that present efforts at camp publicity and promotion were, in the main, inadequate. The 4-H agents disagreed very significantly, their feelings being that present efforts were mostly adequate.

a. Both members and agents did agree that present camp brochures were effective and adequate. They further agreed that agents did promote camping opportunities among county youth, though members were very significantly more critical in their appraisal. Further, while agents felt, in the main, that they had properly informed parents regarding camping and conferences, effectively promoted camping throughout the year, adequately publicized camping through the local newspapers and properly used radio and/or TV to promote camps and conferences, 4-H members disagreed in each case very significantly. This was true for both sexes in each group.

b. Members and agents by districts differed very significantly as reported in 1 (a) above.

2. All 4-H members and agents tended to agree in their positive evaluation of the present camp program. Criteria on which the present camp program received the highest average scores were:

a. Criterion 1 - Our 4-H agents show a sincere interest in young people.

b. Criterion 2 - Most 4-H agents have a working knowledge of the needs and interest of youth.

c. Criterion 3 - Our 4-H agent understands the purpose and value of camping.

d. Criterion 4 - Camp adequately provides inspirational programs.

Members consistently scored the present program higher on the above criteria, than agents, though only Criterion 4 above was significantly higher. While 4-H agents agreed that the cost of camp was too high at the present, 4-H members very significantly disagreed with them.

a. No significant differences were noted between males and females in the evaluation.

b. Members and agents by districts approached or surpassed significance on each of the five evaluative criteria.

Preferred Time of Year for Senior 4-H Conferences

Nearly one-half (49 percent) of all respondents preferred summer for senior 4-H conferences. A higher percent of members (54 percent) than agents (41 percent) preferred summer. The next most popular time of the year was spring, 26 percent of all respondents, 25 percent of members and 28 percent of agents reporting.

1. More girls (61 percent) than boys (43 percent) preferred summer. The difference approached but did not attain significance. More male 4-H agents (46 percent) than female (35 percent) liked summer, at a level approaching though not reaching significance.
2. Members by districts differed at a level approaching significance, those preferring summer varying from a high of 70 percent in District III to a low of 38 percent in District I, nearly one-fourth each of the members from District I preferring spring or fall for senior conferences.

V. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since 4-H members and agents agreed on the reasons why members attend camps and conferences, planners should take careful note of the rank order given to the eight reasons identified in this study.
2. Since seven reasons why 4-H'ers do not attend camp are identified through this study, planners should pay careful attention to the more important ones and seek, where possible, to offset them.

3. Since members and agents agreed on the citizenship, leadership, and character developing benefits of the present camping program, special attention should be given to including and/or continuing these emphases in planning camps and conferences along with the traditional agriculture, home economics, and nature study.
4. Since 4-H member and agent reactions to proposed principles of organizing and conducting successful camps and/or conferences give indicators regarding youth program preferences, planners should study reactions and incorporate findings in their program.
5. Since the evaluation of the present camp program indicates that the present efforts at camp publicity and promotion are fairly weak, those responsible should seek to strengthen releases to youth, parents and the general public through all appropriate media.

VI. FURTHER STUDY

By way of suggestions for additional study, it would appear that findings from the present investigation might lead to the following:

1. Research looking at camps and conferences in terms of the socioeconomic levels of the various counties and districts.
2. Surveys might be conducted of parent perceptions and expectations regarding camps and conferences.
3. Further testing might be done concerning the relative effectiveness of different approaches to camps and conferences, including use of principles and evaluative criteria here identified and tested, times of year indicated and other relevant factors.

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